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HOSTAGES-TERRORISM
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A nuclear weapons expert said today the key to combatting the possible threat of terrorist use of nuclear weapons is close cooperation with the Soviet Union, including trading U.S. intelligence in that area with the Russian KGB.

Bernard O'Keefe, a principal developer of the firing circuits for the first nuclear weapons and whose company, EG&G Inc., continues their manufacture, told reporters, "We should share intelligence with the KGB" on the threat of terrorism moving into the nuclear field.

But Ray Cline, who spent 30 years with the CIA and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, said although "we do get a lot of information from the KGB, it is purely unreliable -- no intelligence agency would take it unsupported."

Cline is now senior associate at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies.

O'Keefe also suggested establishment of an international "hot line" in a neutral country to coordinate alerts on threats to the security of nuclear weapons, nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel and on reporting suspicious explosions.

O'Keefe was among a group of experts briefing the media on papers or arguments they are presenting to the "Conference on International Terrorism: the Nuclear Dimension." More than 100 physicists, nuclear and terrorism experts are attending the two-day conference, which concludes today.

In a prepared paper, O'Keefe said, "The key to international cooperation is the Soviet Union. I think that for all their intransigence, they will be easier to convince than will our own citizens."

"They know that we will not strike first with nuclear weapons," he said. "They recognize that their greatest danger is an accidental or terrorist-inspired nuclear conflagration. They may be more willing than the United States to work out an anti-terrorist agreement."

O'Keefe said the United States needs a vastly expanded intelligence gathering system including within the United States and, "We should begin the debate now on the tradeoffs for intelligence gathering between civil liberties and the cessation of civilization."

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Although the news media are barred from the sessions, breakfast meetings with key experts and mid-day briefings give a broad view of the conference.

The conference was closed to the public, one delegate said, to deprive potential terrorists of the knowledge of current security weaknesses and to keep from their hands "how to" shortcut guides to nuclear bomb construction.

Panels today discussed possible government and industry responses to a nuclear terrorist threat and methods to prevent nuclear violence.

Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., told the conference Monday that ways must be found to "head off a grim terrorist (nuclear) nightmare in the future, even as we wrestle with a difficult terrorist crisis today.

"Anybody who thinks nuclear terrorism can't become a reality hasn't faced reality," he said. "Anybody who thinks terrorists can't acquire the technical knowledge to build an atom bomb hasn't picked up your average encyclopedia or talked to a college physics major."

While sympathizing with President Reagan's "difficult task of asserting our national interest and at the same time trying to extricate our hostages," Gephardt blamed the administration for being part of the growing nuclear problem.

"But now this president and his administration seem bent on undoing the past bipartisan effort to stop nuclear proliferation," he said. "They have dangerously and systematically tried to dismantle the Nuclear Non-proliferation Act. They have taken a foolishly cavalier attitude toward the global spread of nuclear explosive material. Indeed, they have aided and abetted it."